

CALL NO.  
CA1  
MI 800  
-82S018

GOVT



Employment and  
Immigration Canada

Emploi et  
Immigration Canada

John Roberts, Minister

John Roberts, Ministre

Government  
Publications



3 1761 11637823 3

Background Paper 18

RATIONALE FOR PAID EDUCATIONAL  
LEAVE AND RECURRING EDUCATION

Frank X. Wall and Arthur A. Kube

# Skill Development Leave Task Force

Background  
Paper

Canada









Employment and  
Immigration Canada

Emploi et  
Immigration Canada

John Roberts, Minister

John Roberts, Ministre

CAI  
MI 800  
- 825018

Background Paper 18

**RATIONALE FOR PAID EDUCATIONAL  
LEAVE AND RECURRING EDUCATION**

Frank X. Wall and Arthur A. Kube

# **Skill Development Leave Task Force**

**Background  
Paper**





(4)

CA 1  
MI 800

- 825618

Background Paper 18

**RATIONALE FOR PAID EDUCATIONAL  
LEAVE AND RECURRING EDUCATION**

Frank X. Wall and Arthur A. Kube

Canadian Labour Congress

May 10, 1983

This is one in a series of background papers prepared for the Task Force on Skill Development Leave. The opinions expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Task Force or the Department of Employment and Immigration.



Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2023 with funding from  
University of Toronto



<https://archive.org/details/31761116378233>



I would like to thank the Task Force for giving me and my colleague, Arthur Kube, the opportunity to prepare this paper. When the appointment of this Task Force was first announced, we greeted that announcement with elation. Here was an opportunity to propose a strategy for implementing the recommendations for Federal Government Action proposed by the Commission of Inquiry on Paid Education Leave and Productivity.<sup>1</sup>

John Porter in his classic study "The Vertical Mosaic" expressed our concern in terms we cannot improve upon. He said "A society which refuses to remove barriers to educational opportunity is falling short of the democratic ideal."<sup>2</sup>

And we agree with Professors Jackson and Fleming that "We seem to be doing an admirable job of squandering the priceless human resources available to us."<sup>3</sup>

We are paying and will continue to pay for waste of ability unless some way is developed to open the access to our institutions and to provide working people with the means to continue their education.

---

<sup>1</sup> Adams, R.J., Draper, R.M., & Ducharme, C. (1979). Education and Working Canadians. Ottawa: Labour Canada.

<sup>2</sup> Porter, J. (1965). The Vertical Mosaic. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

<sup>3</sup> Jackson, R. W. B., & Fleming, W. G. (1957). "Who Goes to University-English Canada". In C. T. Bissell (Ed.), Canada's Crisis in Higher Education. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.



In the latter part of the twentieth century, Canada will be facing a major educational and training challenge as labour force growth slows and technological change accelerates. There will be a rapid transformation of industries and occupations as economic shifts among nations and the introduction and application of new technologies create vast changes in the workplace.

At the same time, the size of economic growth will not be such that full employment under present public policies can be maintained, given the forthcoming micro-electronic and information revolution.

Therefore, not only does Canada have to pursue new educational training strategies to prepare their existing labour force for the new occupational demands, but it must also find ways of integrating these strategies into an overall labour market policy in such a way as to create a more equitable employment situation.

It is our sincere hope that the Task Force in its deliberation looks upon training and education from a broad social perspective and not solely from a narrow economic view. The very fact that the committee is to consider "skill development leave" and not educational leave give rise to grave concern.

We do not see paid education leave simply as a mechanism for retraining, upgrading and updating of workers but more as one of many instruments to solve the equalization of access to available goods and services of society. It is in this context that we shall present our views on paid education leave in Canada.

## THE PHILOSOPHY AND RATIONALE BEHIND PAID EDUCATIONAL LEAVE

### 1. A Cornerstone in Recurrent Education

During the 1970's scepticism and disillusionment concerning



education has become widespread. Education has not become the great leveller of social inequities as once was hoped. Further, the school system has shown an inability to provide an adequate framework for integrating theory and practice, and in particular, indifferences to changes in the world of work.

One response to these weaknesses and their causes is to move towards a system of recurrent education. Recurrent education is a comprehensive educational strategy for all post-secondary or post-basic education, the essential characteristic of which is the distribution of education over the total life span of the individual in a recurring way, i.e., in alternation with other activities, such as work, but also with leisure and retirement.<sup>1</sup>

Under present practice, formal education and training for most individuals takes place prior to entering the labour force or in the first few years of work experience. During the remainder of life, only the few in relatively high level occupations have the privilege of further education and training. A system of recurrent education would alter this pattern by providing opportunities for education and training throughout the life cycle for broad segments of the work force. Typically, workers would alternate or intersperse periods of work and education to meet both personal needs and those of employers.

In Canada so far, there has been more talk and presentation of general principles than actual action to implement a system

---

<sup>1</sup>OECD (1973). Recurrent Education: A Strategy for Lifelong Learning. Paris: OECD.



of recurrent education. The fundamental weakness in establishing recurrent education in Canada has been the lack of a scheme of student finance combined with entitlement to educational leave, in other words, paid education leave.

## 2. Reducing Unemployment

Today's acceptance of an unemployment rate well over 10 percent is one of the greatest threats to our society. Unless we can resolve the unemployment problem, the rest will not matter very much. We can no longer tolerate the rejection of one in every four young workers trying to find their first job, not to speak of workers who have family responsibilities and because of unemployment are unable to meet these.

We would like to see paid educational leave used as an active labour market policy. We believe that a more comprehensive approach than the present is required to tackle the employment problem. Such an approach would consist of a global package, including educational policies, labour market policies and social policies in combination with economic restructuring.<sup>1</sup>

In this context paid education leave could be a way to rotate workers between periods of employment and periods of training, thereby allowing a larger portion of the labour force to experience regular employment. By providing paid educational leave for employed persons, job openings could be provided for some new employees or to save jobs of some current employees. This approach would require incentives for people to take educational leave, such as adding an educational component to some of the work-sharing programmes of various sorts that already exist in a number of collective agreements.

---

<sup>1</sup>Emmerij, L. (1982). Paid Education Leave with Particular Emphasis on its Financial Aspects. Paris: OECD



### 3. Raising the Levels of Education of the Adult Population

Paid educational leave, as part of a system for recurrent education, can be a vehicle to reduce the large number of under-educated adults presently in the labour market. New technologies being introduced into the workplace require a higher level of basic education. If the present work force is to be able to adapt to that new technology and also to a fast-changing world, then it becomes clearly apparent that adults who did not acquire at least a grade twelve education should be able to obtain at least that level through the vehicle of paid educational leave.<sup>1</sup>

The dilemma is that at the same time as the investment value of education slumps, the importance of its credentialling function seems to increase. High unemployment, the competition for desirable jobs and the raising of educational requirements do, in fact, lead to a large group of students remaining in the education system in order to improve their formal qualifications.

In a time of the worst economic crisis since the depression, we have to ask if society can continue to afford to spend educational monies on a small largely privileged segment of the population while the great masses get little or no benefit from the public expenditure on education.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Berg, I. (1970). Education and Jobs: The Great Training Robbery. New York: Praeger.

<sup>2</sup>Levin, H.M., & Schutze, H.G. (1983). Financial Dimensions of Recurrent Education. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.

The role of recurrent education--paid education leave--would be to reduce the demand for education among secondary graduates. The opportunity of recurrent education opportunities can be seen as a way of assuring them that they need not undertake all of their education experiences prior to entering the labour market.<sup>1</sup>

#### 4. Industrial Democracy

The principal explanation of the welfare differences is the class stratification that originates in working life. It is a well-known fact that there are both quantitative and qualitative differences between the living patterns of persons having good and bad working conditions. It is, therefore, with great interest that we have followed the European discussion of paid educational leave as a means to improve the working life through worker participation.<sup>2</sup>

The purpose of paid education leave under such circumstances is to provide the workers with the knowledge and skills needed to function in a participative organization.

Unless we can develop an organizational structure which encourages the whole work force to contribute their knowledge and utilizes their contributions effectively, Canada will have difficulties in competing with industrialized countries. Until now, the work organization has, by and large, been reflected in Taylorist conceptions, according to which productivity will be maximized by concentrating on as small a number of persons as possible the knowledge and skill re-

---

<sup>1</sup>Levin, H.M., & Schütze, H. G.

<sup>2</sup>Schuller, T. (1981). "Common Discourse: The Language of Industrial Democracy." Education and Industrial Democracy 3:2, 261-291.



quired for production--and even then preferably concentrate this knowledge in persons close to the managerial function.

## 5. Equity

Why should a system of recurrent education or paid education leave offer more chance for their equitable distribution? In the first place, it would prevent the distribution of post-compulsory educational resources from being determined solely by initial success which is so strongly correlated with social background. Moreover, its structure is inherently more suitable for redressing the imbalances which currently place two major sectors of the population, the older generation and women, at such a disadvantage.

Whatever progress has been made in reducing inequality within given age cohorts, one of its corollaries has been the widening of the intergenerational gap which can only be reduced by a positive effort to favour the return of adults to education.

Further, the possibility for paid education leave is also from the point of motivation, a question of equity between different groups. The research literature shows that youths coming from homes with a long educational tradition easily accept a more distant study goal.

The advantage with recurrent periods of study is that it can provide a close link between education and work as well as between theory and practice, thus satisfying a more immediate goal. Motivation is crucial as it is one of the most important factors determining the effectiveness of education. The relationship between motivation and achievement has been repeatedly observed.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Rubenson, K. (1977). Participation in Recurrent Education: A Research Review. Paris: OECD.

Inequality between the sexes is even more pervasive than that between generations. Where recurrent education has a particular contribution to make is in helping to free women from the choice which so often confronts them between the mutually exclusive alternatives of pursuing a career and having children. Obviously, the problems of equality for women cannot be solved only--or indeed chiefly--by a reform of the educational system, but solutions would be advanced by a pattern of recurring opportunities for learning that is better suited to their life cycle. Further, paid education leave could be used to encourage women to select occupations without regard to sex, and should be set up with mechanisms specifically designed to help women overcome the obstacles to their participation.

The growing polarization on the labour market, with some jobs requiring higher and higher qualifications while others demand substantially reduced qualifications, creates a special problem for women. There is an apparent risk that women, to an even higher extent than today, will enter into "dead-end" positions that lead nowhere. The hope for this group is that there will be available educational opportunities which will enable them to advance to more demanding and rewarding jobs.

#### 6. Economic Efficiency

An analysis of paid education leave has to be undertaken with two main criteria in mind: efficiency and equity. So far we have dealt primarily with the latter. The reason for this is that the economical aspects are so obvious and have come to dominate the debate. Who can deny the urgent need to develop a system of paid education leave to meet the enormous shifts in occupational skills that are taking place at an increasing speed?



However do not let us forget Stoikov's<sup>1</sup> conclusion that empirical evidence allows a rather unambiguous answer to the question as to which groups of the working population are particularly vulnerable to obsolescence. The poorer the educational background in terms of quantity and quality, the higher is the risk of obsolescence.

#### 7. Efficiency of Educational Institutions

One of the arguments for paid education leave is that a guaranteed opportunity to return later would enhance the system's effectiveness. The reason for this is that persons with prior work experience would be more goal oriented and would change their programs of study less often.

Another very important aspect of effectiveness is adaption to change. It is difficult for an educational organization in which prolonged, continuous education predominates to match up to the demands posed by a rapidly changing labour market. This is reflected, for example, by the discussion now in progress in practically all sectors of the labour market concerning a great and growing need for in-service training and further training. Educational organization ought, furthermore, to be flexible enough to be able to cope with structural changes, partly through the content of education being built up in such a way that those portions which are of direct vocational relevance can be adapted relatively easily to new demands. It is also probable that the need for flexibility can be better provided for, if education is divided into several periods, spread out

---

<sup>1</sup>Stoikov, V. (1975). The Economics of Recurrent Education and Training. Geneva: ILO.

over a person's active career. With an organization of this kind, it should be easier to achieve qualitative agreement between supply and demand, because planning will not need to cover such long periods of time. Another assumption is that paid education leave produces greater individual mobility in the labour market both vertically within a single occupation and horizontally between different occupational sectors.

Prerequisites for a Development  
Toward an Efficient and Equitable System  
of Paid Education Leave

1. Legislated Provisions for Paid Education Leave

Our members have insisted on provisions in almost every collective agreement we've negotiated, providing some form of educational leave. They recognize the need to remove the barrier of time commitment to a job. The best will in the world will not enable a shift worker to further his or her education unless they are released from the requirement to attend work. Those proposals would never have been placed on the bargaining table were there not a wide awareness of the need for leave among all our members. There can be no doubt that they know that it's needed.

To date we have not met with notable success in removing that second barrier--the financial barrier. Despite outcries to the contrary, few workers can afford to go without income while they seek education. Their financial commitment to family and home is such that it cannot be shrugged off. As a result they have been able to leap one hurdle only to be stymied by the next.

While employers seem agreeable, however hesitantly, to the



concept of leave, the proposals for paid leave meet with intransigence and refusal. The common thread in all discussions seems to be that it is someone else's responsibility. We believe that, if left solely to the collective bargaining process, universal paid education leave will never become a reality. Governments must legislate provisions for paid education leave for all workers in their respective jurisdictions.

The degree of interest in paid education leave is directly related to its possibility. In those few isolated areas where leave is available with pay, our experience has been that interest is high, relative to areas where it is not available. It is also worth a look at other European experiences. Schütze<sup>1</sup> concludes that the low degree of utilization in Germany of available possibilities for paid education leave is due to the lack of educational and training offerings which are suitable to the needs and expectations of adults with little schooling. It is interesting to learn that the German Federal Government, therefore, has sponsored some extensive model programmes where the needs, interest and motivation of special target groups (e.g., young people, migrant workers, women, unskilled or semi-skilled, industrial workers) have been studied and evaluated in order to assess the kinds of outreach, counselling and course content which can best reach these groups.

The foreign experiences correspond to what is happening here in Canada. We have encountered resistance by the usual institutions providing the training for a large number of our members who

---

<sup>1</sup>Schütze, H. G. (1983). "Educational Leave in the Federal Republic of Germany: Participation, Costs and Finance." In H.M. Levin & H.G. Schutze (Eds.), Financing Recurrent Education. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.

were alienated by the "system" early in life.

We have found that members will attend in large numbers courses held under the auspices of the Union, but will effectively boycott the same course with the same instructor when it is provided by post-secondary institutes. We must also refer to the Scandinavian scene where the labour movement is playing a significant role in education. By publically financing this education, it has become possible to reach large groups which are not using the formal institutions.<sup>1</sup>

Another crucial question is the accessibility of post-secondary education to broad categories of the population. From this aspect, the rules of access become an important instrument in the planning of recurrent education. When making access to a particular form of education conditional on previously acquired educational qualifications, the conditions should be based on what is empirically justified in view of the student's subsequent activities. One important precondition for the efficient operation of the educational system is for the rules concerning eligibility not to be characterized by narrow-mindedness. Thus people must have the chance of qualifying for a particular course of education or a particular occupation by different routes.

This can be done by implying greater values to job experience, both in the assessment of eligibility to embark on a course of studies and in the selection of applicants. Ideally the rules should be designed, among other things, to open new educational routes to persons who have previously been excluded from a large proportion

---

<sup>1</sup>Hoghielm, R., & Rubenson, K. (1980). Adult Education for Social Change. Lund: CWK Gleerup.



of the educational system, reduce the social bias of recruitment especially for certain desirable educational programmes and also encourage younger persons to plan their studies in the form of recurrent education.

A development of recurrent education--paid education leave will make additional demands on counselling. Unless a certain institutional basis is made available for direct activation measures, the development of paid educational leave will most probably help increase the social bias of post-secondary education.

In short, it should be noted that the research in this field has shown the insufficiency of attempting to inform and influence individuals by traditional methods. Indeed, all of the experiments conducted so far serve to underline the importance of activation measures proceeding via organizations to which the target group belongs.

#### AND FINALLY COMMITMENT:

Trade unions in British Columbia have been authorized by their members to provide paid education leave for union training with their dues money. While that may seem, on its face, a small commitment, it becomes major when the magnitude of that endorsement is considered.

We have been authorized by our members to provide each of our more than 15,000 stewards and officers with at least one day paid training and we have been further authorized to provide annually a week's paid leave for our more than 2,000 local activists. Our total annual budgetary commitment to paid educational leave for union training is in excess of two million dollars or more than 10 percent of our total annual income. Less than \$100,000.00 of that amount comes from the annual Labour Canada grant. We would not have that

approval if our members did not share a commitment to paid education leave.

Ultimately, working men and women will pay for their own education. They will pay through prices or they will pay through taxation. There is no other source. And the individual worker who takes advantage of paid educational leave will return that investment to his or her society through increased productivity.

That productivity will not be solely related to the job, but will be returned in the form of increased activity in the society whether in the Union, the community or at work.

We ask that the initial investment be borne by the employers. But in doing so, we recognize that they will recoup that capital through price increases or taxation decreases. And they will share in the profit that comes to all when inequalities are reduced. Canada will also be able to lay claim to having instituted the I.L.O. Convention on Paid Education Leave.

We thank the Task Force for their attention. Our rationale may not be the compilation of statistics and dry policy proposals that was anticipated. It is, however, an expression of our very deep concern for our members. We look to the Task Force for solutions.

May 10/83

/mm  
opeiu 225.



THIS BACKGROUND PAPER IS AVAILABLE FOR  
REFERENCE AT CANADIAN RESEARCH LIBRARIES IN BOTH  
OFFICIAL LANGUAGES.

THE REPORT OF THE SKILL DEVELOPMENT LEAVE TASK  
FORCE, "LEARNING A LIVING IN CANADA", IS  
GENERALLY DISTRIBUTED. TO RECEIVE COPIES OF THE  
REPORT, CONTACT:

Enquiries and Distribution  
Public Affairs  
Employment and Immigration Commission  
140 Promenades du Portage  
Hull, Québec  
K1A 0J9  
(819) 994-6313















